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From: Skahen, Mary (EHS) <mary.skahen@massmail.state.ma.us>
Sent: Friday, June 29, 2012 2:59 PM
To: Hanchett, James (DPH)
Subject: A Message from Secretary Bigby

Colleagues:

Thanks to our leadership on health care reform in Massachusetts, President Obama and his partners in Congress had a successful model for the Affordable Care Act to provide near universal health care coverage for the first time in American history.

Now, the Affordable Care Act is an important part of Governor Patrick's efforts to promote health care innovation here in Massachusetts. I am delighted that the Supreme Court has settled this debate and upheld the Affordable Care Act so we can move forward as a nation.

We are excited to work with the Obama Administration to advance our exciting health care initiatives that are happening here in Massachusetts, thanks to the Affordable Care Act.

We are working under the ACA through our Department of Public Health on efforts to prevent obesity and chronic disease, while strengthening public health infrastructure and expanding immunizations. Massachusetts was awarded one of seven "Early Innovator" grants under the ACA working to design and implement Health Information Technology infrastructure to build a better health insurance marketplace.

We have also been implementing the ACA law to help individuals who need long-term service and some of the sickest people who are enrolled in both Medicare and MassHealth. More than 62,000 seniors and people with disabilities in Massachusetts have saved money on their prescription drugs.

Massachusetts seniors and those with disabilities who are covered by Medicare have saved, on average, \$648 so far this year on prescription drugs bought through the so-called "donut hole" coverage gap. And since 2010, the savings in Massachusetts have totaled more than \$64 million.

We have many more exciting programs in the works in partnership with the ACA that will advance Massachusetts' nation-leading efforts to provide affordable and accessible care.

Thanks to our work together, we've achieved so much in Massachusetts: universal coverage, 99% of children covered, improved access for disadvantaged and vulnerable populations, and sustained world-class health care.

We should be proud of all of these achievements and this is certainly a time to celebrate. But we still have more work to do to make health care in Massachusetts truly accessible and affordable and to achieve the high quality of care that we all want. And multiple provisions in the ACA will support our reforms towards a better delivery system and cost containment.

Now is the time to renew our commitment to universal and affordable health care as a fundamental right for all. I thank you for your work to make this vision a reality.

JudyAnn Bigby. M.D.

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